IN MEMORY OF JAMES PRICKETT

On 6 March 1965 a representative gathering of local body members, schoolmasters, amateur botanists and ornithologists met at Kauri Park, Birkenhead, to open officially the new Park Entrance and dedicate a park seat to the memory of the late Mr. James Prickett.

(I have had reports of this ceremony from both Miss Crookes and Mrs. Moisson, who also sent a cutting from a Shore newspaper. What follows therefore is a precis of the 3 accounts with some added notes of my own. My thanks and apologies to both ladies.)

Over 100 people attended the ceremony which impressed everyone with its simplicity and sincerity. The new entrance is a decided improvement and adds, as Mrs. Moisson says, to the beauty and dignity of an already fine bush reserve. The memorial seat, unveiled by Mr. Ross McKenzie, also met with approval. There is a vigorous young kawaka just inside the entrance which adds to the general effect, and the reserve contains several botanical rarities which are well worth preserving. Eugenia maire, Libocedrus plumosa, Mida salicifolia, Nothofagus truncata, Phebalium nudum, Phyllocladus glaucus, and among the orchids, Prasophyllum nudum and Corybas aconitiflorus. I was startled once to find a kingfern growing happily in the gully bottom, but discovered later that Jim Prickett had planted it there. I got to know him quite well some 20 years ago, during my Winter Garden days. Often on a Monday he would burst cheerfully into the nurseries bearing seedlings of native plants he had gathered during his weekend excursions into the bush. These would be potted up and reared to a decent size (and woe betide me if any should fail to thrive), then used to embellish the Cheeseman Flower Show, or planted out in the various 'native' corners of the Domain Gardens. Mr. Prickett was a foundation member of the Botanical Society and of course a tower of strength to Forest and Bird. He was most enthusiastic about forest preservation, in particular touching the security of the native birds which were his main interest. Mrs. Moisson tells me also that he was skilled in woodwork, turning out as an additional hobby, some 50 spinning wheels for the Red Cross. To end on a note from Miss Crookes - ' It is appropriate that the memorial seat should be located in Kauri Park, since Mr. Prickett's foresight, energy and enthusiasm played a great part in acquiring this beautiful reserve for the enjoyment of the public '. E.D.H.

MEETING 7 April 1965

Mr. Lediard ran through the slides taken by various members on Egmont last January, every now and then slipping in a brightly coloured fungus for fun. Clouds and mountain tops, and Mr.Dawsons twin falls. Orchids for the editor and the usual run of alpines - Euphrasia and Ourisia, Wahlenbergia, Luzuriaga and Viola. Buttercups and daisies in profusion - sometimes in confusion, all of them beautiful and a colour photographers dream. And in and

around everything, the picturesque Cordyline indivisa. Forstera bidwillii was another old friend I hadn't seen for years. Hebe odora and stricta var egmontiana were somehow bigger and brighter than their lowland counterparts. By and large a most interesting evening. E.D.H.

HUIA 24 April 1965 - - - F.M.Warren

The highlight of this trip was to have been the examination of a fine stand of monoao (Dacrydium kirkii) but the weather decreed otherwise. After 3 weeks of glorious sunshine and blue skies, the rain set in and took charge in no uncertain manner. It was most unfortunate, as we were a party of over 30. However we took off in high spirits, and plodded steadily through the rain until the middle camp was reached. Here Mr. Tom Wood led us to the shelter of an old tramping club hut where we had lunch, some sitting on the floor, some on a heap of dry teatree, and some just standing. Everyone seemed cheerful and happy, although somewhat damp. After lunch a council of war was held. The trip to the Dacrydiums was abandoned, as it meant crossing the stream and wading probably more than knee deep. The majority elected to tramp a further 2 miles with Mr. Wood to see the dam, while the remainder worked their way quietly back towards Huia and the bus.

The rain eased a little, then descended more heavily than ever. It was a very wet party that returned from the dam, but there were no complaints. It seems they found the sight most rewarding, making their unpleasant walk well worthwhile. Botanically the trip was far from perfect, but through rain-bleared eyes I did notice Pratia angulata and Hoheria populnea, both in flower; Quintinia serrata and a fine stand of kauri and other trees on a ridge not far distant. It is unfortunate that this interesting area will shortly be closed to us. However we have had the opportunity of seeing the site of the new dam and that part of the valley which is to be cleared of bush. Our thanks are tendered to Mr. and Mrs. Wood for leading the trip under such atrocious conditions. F.M.W.

CHARACTERES GENERUM PLANTARUM J.R. & G. Forster 1776.

Johannes Reinold Forster LL.D.,F.R.S., was a German of eventual Scottish ancestry. In no book I have read has a single good word been said of him. An improvident lawyer-cum-parson, he was middle-aged, rheumatic and stony-broke; learned in his way but knowing little out of his way; cursed with a petulant nature and a bitterly critical tongue; the world disliking - by the world disliked. Yet he must have been possessed of considerable technical skill and knowledge to have obtained the government - sponsored post of Naturalist to Cook's second voyage, not to mention an F.R.S. And in a period of patronage, an ability to impress and persuade.